



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION II  
EDISON, NEW JERSEY 08837

COMPLETED  
FILE COPY

POTENTIAL HAZARDOUS WASTE SITE  
PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

Site Name: Brooklyn Union Gas Company--Williamsburgh Works

Address: Kent Ave., N. 12th St. (East River), Brooklyn, NY 11211

County: Kings

EPA I.D. No.: NYD980532030

Summary:

This was formerly the site of a coal-gasification plant, purchased by Brooklyn Union Gas (B.U.G.) Company at the turn of the century. One of the by-products produced during the plant's operating years was a hydrocarbon tar which was temporarily stored on site until sold for use in roofing or road surfacing. According to B.U.G., when the plant was decommissioned in 1936, all remaining tars were reportedly removed and the facility was razed. Ownership and use of the property since 1936 is unknown.

Priority for Inspection: High \_\_\_\_  
Medium \_\_\_\_  
Low X (See attachment to Part 1 of PA form.)  
None \_\_\_\_

Recommendations:

Keep informed of NYSDEC's planned inspections of all B.U.G. sites and obtain a copy of each inspection report as completed (request already made in 7/23/86 letter to Sudhir Jagirdar of NYSDEC).

Prepared by: Amy J. Brochu, Environmental Engineer  
U.S. EPA, Environmental Services Division

Date: August 14, 1986

298607





POTENTIAL HAZARDOUS WASTE SITE  
PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT  
PART 1 - SITE INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT

I. IDENTIFICATION  
01 STATE 02 SITE NUMBER  
NY D980532030

II. SITE NAME AND LOCATION

01 SITE NAME (Legal, common, or descriptive name of site) Brooklyn Union Gas--Williamsburgh Works		02 STREET, ROUTE NO., OR SPECIFIC LOCATION IDENTIFIER Kent Ave., N. 12th St., East River			
03 CITY Brooklyn	04 STATE NY	05 ZIP CODE 11211	06 COUNTY Kings	07 COUNTY CODE 047	08 CONG DIST 6-19
09 COORDINATES LATITUDE 40 43 25 N		LONGITUDE 073 57 30 W			
10 DIRECTIONS TO SITE (Starting from nearest public road)					

III. RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

01 OWNER (if known) formerly, Brooklyn Union Gas Company		02 STREET (Business, mailing, residential) 195 Montague Street			
03 CITY Brooklyn	04 STATE NY	05 ZIP CODE 11201	06 TELEPHONE NUMBER (718 403-3053	(Kate Hartnett, Engr. Dept.)	
07 OPERATOR (if known and different from owner) formerly, same as above		08 STREET (Business, mailing, residential)			
09 CITY	10 STATE	11 ZIP CODE	12 TELEPHONE NUMBER ( )		
13 TYPE OF OWNERSHIP (Check one) <input type="checkbox"/> A. PRIVATE <input type="checkbox"/> B. FEDERAL: _____ (Agency name) <input type="checkbox"/> C. STATE <input type="checkbox"/> D. COUNTY <input type="checkbox"/> E. MUNICIPAL <input type="checkbox"/> F. OTHER: _____ (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> G. UNKNOWN (current owner unknown)					
14 OWNER/OPERATOR NOTIFICATION ON FILE (Check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> A. RCRA 3001 DATE RECEIVED: ____/____/____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. UNCONTROLLED WASTE SITE (CERCLA 103 d) DATE RECEIVED: 6/9/81 MONTH DAY YEAR MONTH DAY YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> C. NONE					

IV. CHARACTERIZATION OF POTENTIAL HAZARD

01 ON SITE INSPECTION <input type="checkbox"/> YES DATE ____/____/____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		BY (Check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> A. EPA <input type="checkbox"/> B. EPA CONTRACTOR <input type="checkbox"/> C. STATE <input type="checkbox"/> D. OTHER CONTRACTOR <input type="checkbox"/> E. LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIAL <input type="checkbox"/> F. OTHER: _____ (Specify) CONTRACTOR NAME(S): _____			
02 SITE STATUS (Check one) <input type="checkbox"/> A. ACTIVE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. INACTIVE <input type="checkbox"/> C. UNKNOWN		03 YEARS OF OPERATION BEGINNING YEAR 1850 ENDING YEAR 1936 <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN			
04 DESCRIPTION OF SUBSTANCES POSSIBLY PRESENT, KNOWN, OR ALLEGED Possible spills of hydrocarbon tars (containing benzene, pyridine, cresols, toluene, naphthalene, hydrogen sulfide, and phenol) occurring prior to 1936. During years of operation, tars were temporarily stored in on-site holding tanks.					
05 DESCRIPTION OF POTENTIAL HAZARD TO ENVIRONMENT AND/OR POPULATION Soil possibly contaminated with trace amounts of hydrocarbon tar. (Impact probably reduced by time and excavation of soils.) Leachate into groundwater is not a major concern because area groundwater is not used as a potable water supply.					

V. PRIORITY ASSESSMENT

01 PRIORITY FOR INSPECTION (Check one. If high or medium is checked, complete Part 2 - Waste Information and Part 3 - Description of Hazardous Conditions and Incidents) <input type="checkbox"/> A. HIGH (inspection required promptly) <input type="checkbox"/> B. MEDIUM (inspection required) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C. LOW * (inspect on time available basis) <input type="checkbox"/> D. NONE *SEE ATTACHMENT. (no further action needed, complete current disposition form)			
---	--	--	--

VI. INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM

01 CONTACT Diana Messina		02 OF (Agency/Organization) EPA/ESD/SMB/Superfund Support Section		03 TELEPHONE NUMBER (201) 321-6776	
04 PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSESSMENT Amy J. Brochu		05 AGENCY EPA	06 ORGANIZATION ESD/SMB/Sprfnd.	07 TELEPHONE NUMBER (201) 906-6802	08 DATE 8/14/86 MONTH DAY YEAR

Attachment to PA Form

Background on Former Coal-Gasification Plants  
(Brooklyn Union Gas Company Sites)

The thirteen Brooklyn Union Gas locations labelled as "Works" are all former coal-gasification plants that began recovering natural gas from coal and oil for sale and distribution to customers in the mid-1800's. Just before the turn of the century, the Brooklyn Union Gas Company (B.U.G.) began purchasing these small plants. By 1950, eight of the thirteen works purchased by B.U.G. had been decommissioned and the remaining five plants were shut down during the following decade. Today, according to B.U.G., nothing remains of the original facilities; in fact, most of the properties were sold by B.U.G. and reportedly paved over as parking lots or playgrounds or excavated for building construction. (In a few cases, B.U.G. retained some property in the vicinity and constructed a gate station there; however, the gate stations were reportedly not built on the same sites as the old facilities but, rather, across the street or on the corner of the lot.)

When the gas manufacturing plants were still in operation, a by-product of their processes was a hydrocarbon tar which contained amounts of the following hazardous substances: benzene, pyridine, cresols, naphthalene, toluene, hydrogen sulfide, and phenol. (For this reason, Brooklyn Union Gas Company filed a "Notification of Hazardous Waste Site" form for each of these locations in 1981.) This by-product tar was temporarily stored in holding tanks at the plants until it could be sold for use in roofing or road surfacing, or sold to chemical companies for its constituents. As each plant was decommissioned, all remaining tars were reportedly removed from the holding tanks and sold, and the facilities themselves were razed (according to record searches and investigations conducted by B.U.G. back in 1981).

Because all of these facilities were torn down at least 25 years ago and some of the sites are now covered with pavement or buildings, it would be difficult to determine whether any significant spills of hazardous materials had occurred during the operation of the coal gasification plants. Even if some tar had been spilled, the contaminated soils would most likely have been mixed throughout the clean soils when the sites were cleared of the old facilities. Therefore, there is little reason to suspect that anything more than trace amounts of tar would remain in the soils at each site today. And, because area groundwater is not used as a potable water supply, any leachate from the sites is of minimal concern.

Nevertheless, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) currently has plans to inspect all of the Brooklyn Union Gas locations by the end of the calendar year. In view of the difficulties mentioned above, the inspections may serve only to confirm that the sites were indeed completely cleared of the gas manufacturing plants (as B.U.G. maintains) and that new structures have been built there. Instead of duplicating State efforts, EPA has arranged to be kept informed of all NYSDEC inspections conducted at B.U.G. sites (both former and existing) and to be copied on the individual inspection reports as each one is completed. Therefore, the need for an EPA inspection has been given a "low" priority in Part 1 of the PA forms completed for these thirteen former coal-gasification sites.





POTENTIAL HAZARDOUS WASTE SITE  
PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

PART 3 - DESCRIPTION OF HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS AND INCIDENTS

I. IDENTIFICATION

01 STATE 02 SITE NUMBER  
NY D980532030

II. HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS AND INCIDENTS

01 ☐ A. GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION

03 POPULATION POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: \_\_\_\_\_

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_)

04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

☐ POTENTIAL

☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ B. SURFACE WATER CONTAMINATION

03 POPULATION POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: \_\_\_\_\_

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_)

04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

☐ POTENTIAL

☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ C. CONTAMINATION OF AIR

03 POPULATION POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: \_\_\_\_\_

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_)

04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

☐ POTENTIAL

☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ D. FIRE/EXPLOSIVE CONDITIONS

03 POPULATION POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: \_\_\_\_\_

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_)

04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

☐ POTENTIAL

☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ E. DIRECT CONTACT

03 POPULATION POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: \_\_\_\_\_

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_)

04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

☐ POTENTIAL

☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ F. CONTAMINATION OF SOIL

03 AREA POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Acres)

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_)

04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

☐ POTENTIAL

☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ G. DRINKING WATER CONTAMINATION

03 POPULATION POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: \_\_\_\_\_

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_)

04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

☐ POTENTIAL

☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ H. WORKER EXPOSURE/INJURY

03 WORKERS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: \_\_\_\_\_

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_)

04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

☐ POTENTIAL

☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ I. POPULATION EXPOSURE/INJURY

03 POPULATION POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: \_\_\_\_\_

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_)

04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

☐ POTENTIAL

☐ ALLEGED



POTENTIAL HAZARDOUS WASTE SITE  
PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT  
PART 3 - DESCRIPTION OF HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS AND INCIDENTS

I. IDENTIFICATION

01 STATE 02 SITE NUMBER  
NY D980532030

II. HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS AND INCIDENTS (Continued)

01 ☐ J. DAMAGE TO FLORA  
04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_) ☐ POTENTIAL ☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ K. DAMAGE TO FAUNA  
04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Include names of species)

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_) ☐ POTENTIAL ☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ L. CONTAMINATION OF FOOD CHAIN  
04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_) ☐ POTENTIAL ☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ M. UNSTABLE CONTAINMENT OF WASTES

(Spills/runoff/standing liquids/leaking drums)

03 POPULATION POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: \_\_\_\_\_

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_) ☐ POTENTIAL ☐ ALLEGED

04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

01 ☐ N. DAMAGE TO OFFSITE PROPERTY  
04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_) ☐ POTENTIAL ☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ O. CONTAMINATION OF SEWERS, STORM DRAINS, WWTPs  
04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_) ☐ POTENTIAL ☐ ALLEGED

01 ☐ P. ILLEGAL/UNAUTHORIZED DUMPING  
04 NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

02 ☐ OBSERVED (DATE: \_\_\_\_\_) ☐ POTENTIAL ☐ ALLEGED

05 DESCRIPTION OF ANY OTHER KNOWN, POTENTIAL, OR ALLEGED HAZARDS

III. TOTAL POPULATION POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: \_\_\_\_\_

IV. COMMENTS

V. SOURCES OF INFORMATION (Cite specific references, e.g., State files, sample analyses, reports)

"Notification of Hazardous Waste Site", filed 6/81 (with attachment by B.U.G.)  
Katherine Hartnett, Technical Analyst, Brooklyn Union Gas Company